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FM REO BASRAH  
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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: REO MEETS WITH MEMBERS OF BASRAH NATIONAL TREND

CLASSIFIED BY: Ramon Negron, Director, Regional Embassy Office  
Basrah, Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶1. (C) On August 20, Poloff met with representatives from three of the four parties that make up the Basrah National Trend (BNT): Kadim Hussieni Ali (Communist Party), Sa'ad Abd al-Aziz (Democratic Popular Assembly), and Tariq Yaseen al-Ibraysim (Democratic National Party). The trio explained that while the BNT consisted of 9 parties in the past, it will consist of only 4 parties in the next elections. Since the BNT is registered to run in Basrah only, the remaining 5 parties opted to run at the national level as individual parties.

¶2. (C) Al-Ibraysim somberly predicted that the coalition would not perform well. He blamed the problem on corruption within IHEC, which he accused of being controlled by the large parties. Al-Ibraysim also complained that their coalition had no large support, saying, "we have no Iran." He added that the US and Coalition Forces must ensure that the liberal, democratic parties are strong before pulling out. Al-Aziz suggested that they intervene as much as possible to prevent Iranian influence and cited the removal of former Police Chief Jalil as one example of the damage Iran has caused. Ali stressed their distrust of the current government, adding that he can't rely on them to provide security - given their ties to a foreign government. He also complained that the Kirkuk question was keeping the entire country from moving forward on the elections. Ali called for the election law to be passed and for elections to be held as early as possible.

NEGRON